

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 ORM-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 FEA-01 TRSE-00 IO-11 OMB-01

AID-05 /095 W

----- 022136

R 261909Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8216

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05762

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VN CB FR VS SREF

SUBJECT: SOME FRENCH VIEWS ON INDOCHINA

REF: STATE 022618

SUMMARY. IN PERIODIC TOUR D'HORIZON THE QUAI'S NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA COVERING VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS, FRANCOIS DOPFFER, SPOKE OF FRENCH FLIGHTS TO VIETNAM, VIETNAMESE DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING PETROLEUM AND THE CAMBODIAN REPRESENTATION IN PARIS. END SUMMARY.

1. VN: FRENCH FLIGHTS. DOPFFER SAID THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR REGULAR FLIGHTS TO VIETNAM HAVE NOT GREATLY ADVANCED AND THE GOF HAS RENEWED THE SPECIAL SAIGON/BANGKOK FLIGHTS FOR TWO MORE MONTHS (UNTIL END OF APRIL) STILL AT THE RATE OF FIVE FLIGHTS PER WEEK.

2. VN. PETROLEUM. DOPFFER SAID THAT THE PRINCIPAL FRENCH DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VIETNAMESE CONCERNING PETROLEUM WERE BETWEEN ELF/AQUITAINE (CONNECTED WITH MITSU-
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BISHI) AND THE DRV ABOUT POSSIBLE PROSPECTING, ETC.,

IN NORTH VIETNAM. THESE TALKS WERE STILL IN THE EXPLORATORY STAGE. THE COMPAGNIE GENERALE D'EXPLORATION GEOPHYSIQUE WAS CONCERNED ONLY WITH SEISMIC EXPLORATION ON THE LAND IN THE MEKONG DELTA AREA. THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN HANOI IS FOLLOWING THE VIETNAMESE CONTACTS AND NOTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE FRENCH AND JAPANESE, THE CANADIANS, ITALIANS AND NORWEGIANS HAD SENT REPRESENTATIVES TO HANOI TO DISCUSS PETROLEUM. THE VIETNAMESE HAD SAID OPENLY THAT THEY WERE INTERESTED IN CONTACTS WITH THE AMERICANS, PARTICULARLY MOBIL. THE FRENCH HAD FOLLOWED THE VISITS OF THE VICE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY TO MANY OF THE OPEC COUNTRIES AND HAD CONCLUDED THAT, WHILE INTERESTED IN MOVING AHEAD ON PETROLEUM EXTRACTION, THE DRV WAS STILL BASICALLY COLLECTING INFORMATION ON THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN THIS FIELD AND STUDYING WHAT THE VIETNAMESE APPROACH SHOULD BE.

3. CAMBODIA. REPRESENTATION IN FRANCE. IN VIEW OF THE POSSIBLE INTERMEDIARY ROLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC CAMBODIA REPRESENTATION IN PARIS IN FACILITATING THE RETURN OF SOME CAMBODIANS IN THE US (REFTEL), EMBOFF ASKED ABOUT THE REPRESENTATION HERE. ACCORDING TO DOPFFER THE MISSION IS FUNCTIONING AS BEFORE. THERE HAS BEEN NO WORD ON THE RETURN FROM PEKING OF THE FORMER HEAD (OK SAKUN) AND HIS DEPUTY (IN SOKAN); NEITHER HAS AS YET APPLIED FOR A VISA. DOPFFER SAID THAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE VISA BE GIVEN EVEN THOUGH HE WAS AWARE THAT SOME OTHER PARTS OF THE QUAI THOUGHT THAT THE GOF SHOULD TURN THE SCREWS ON THE CAMBODIANS AND IMPLY THAT THERE SHOULD BE RECIPROCITY IN THEIR RELATIONS. A PRELIMINARY SIGNAL MIGHT BE THE REFUSAL TO ISSUE THE VISAS UNTIL CAMBODIA INDICATED WHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED. DOPFFER CONCURRED IN THE VIEW OF THE CONSULAR AFFAIRS SECTION THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR FRANCE TO ACCEPT CAMBODIANS FROM THE US WHO WISHED TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA UNLESS IT WAS SURE THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE EASILY AND QUICKLY TO TRANSIT PARIS FOR PEKING. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE CAMBODIAN MISSION AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE GOF, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN RELIABLE GUARANTEES ON THIS POINT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, PETROLEUM, FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS05762
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760073-0563
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760210/aaaaahyy.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 22618
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOME FRENCH VIEWS ON INDOCHINA
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, VN, CB, FR, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006